



# The local campaigner

After a five year road-safety battle by CTC campaigner **Roy Spilsbury**, the local council has lifted its threat of legal action for accessing Llandudno via its promenade

**A**t the CTC AGM in 2006, Roy Spilsbury was named CTC Volunteer of the Year. He already did – and still does – a lot to promote cycling locally. But that year he was ‘the face of CTC’ in the media in the wake of the tragic death of four Rhyl Cycling Club members near Abergele. Roy, who lives nearby and knew the riders, calmly articulated the cyclists’ position.

Cyclists’ safety on the North Wales coast was suddenly in the spotlight. As it happened, Roy had already become embroiled in a battle with the local council to secure the rights of cyclists to ride along Llandudno’s expansive promenade – primarily to increase cyclists’ safety.

‘There was a proposal in 2005 to take the coastal cycle path – it would have been National Cycle Route 5 – down the promenade,’ Roy explained. ‘There was a public consultation. I put a written submission in on behalf of CTC, which was almost identical to one put in by Sustrans. The consultation found heavily in favour of a cycle path on the promenade. But the council totally ignored that.’

They demanded that cyclists dismount and walk along the prom, which is one and a half miles long and as wide as a trunk road. It’s so large that there were over a dozen car rallies on the promenade last year. ‘It’s much wider than the Parade, the actual highway,’ Roy said. ‘That is closely parked on, both sides, with narrow pinch points.’

‘The primary concern here is the public interest. What I’ve been doing is pressing the fact that public safety is at risk. But in



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the five years this has gone on, the council has not allocated, as far as I can see, one minute to considering the safety of cyclists accessing Llandudno along this north shore corridor.’

Despite the public consultation and advice from their own scrutiny committee, the council stood their ground: cyclists on the prom would be fined. While cyclists had been using the prom before – including one ex-councillor who said he’d been using it all of his life and would continue to do so – the proposed cycle route brought matters to a head.

Roy argued that neither the local byelaws nor a lease agreement with the prom’s landowner forbade cycling there. And he and some fellow cyclists were prepared to take direct action to prove it.

‘We’ve got a group of well-heeled, former high-grade professionals here in Llandudno, who said they wanted to give

notice of their intention to cycle down the promenade and challenge a prosecution. I put it to the County: ‘What precisely would be the wording of the charge? And if the County was minded to prosecute, upon what public interest grounds would such an action be pursued?’

‘The conciliatory response provided the desperately needed road-safety breakthrough we needed – an assurance that the threat of a monetary penalty for simply riding to and from the town centre along the prom would be lifted. Quite correctly, legal sanctions would remain in place for irresponsible riding, or causing harm to other prom users.’

Roy’s success was due not only to persistence but because of the way he presented his arguments, particularly in the local press. ‘My advice,’ he said, ‘would be to present cogent, simple statements, and to pitch at the public. If you spend too much time debating, persuading individuals to change their position, you’ll find you have no energy left to pitch to the public.’

‘Too often cycle campaigning is reactive to an agenda which has been set by prejudice. What it has to do is be proactive. It has to set its agenda. And this is where the internet and a website come in useful. If you intend to make a point, prepare a web page and fire that web page at your local press.’

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There’s more background information on this story on the website that Roy edits: [www.cyclingnorthwales.co.uk](http://www.cyclingnorthwales.co.uk)